



Legislative Audit Division

State of Montana

Report to the Legislature

November 2004

Performance Audit Survey

Accessibility to Management Information from the Child and Adult Protective Services (CAPS) System

**Child and Family Services Division
Operations and Technology Division
Department of Public Health and Human Services**

This survey provides background information on the accessibility to management information from the Child and Adult Protective Services (CAPS) system. Based on our review, there appear to be two main issues in relation to management information, which are:

- ▶ **The ability to adjust to change.**
- ▶ **The capability for user-generated reports.**

Since department plans for a future system consider these two areas, we do not believe further audit work is necessary.

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04P-10

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November 2004

The Legislative Audit Committee
of the Montana State Legislature:

This is our performance audit survey on the accessibility to management information from the Child and Adult Protective Services (CAPS) system. The Child and Family Services and Operations and Technology divisions, Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), administer CAPS. The survey contains information on the CAPS system; however, based on our review, we do not believe further audit work is necessary.

We wish to express our appreciation to DPHHS personnel for their cooperation and assistance during our review.

Respectfully submitted,

(Signature on File)

Scott A. Seacat
Legislative Auditor

Legislative Audit Division

Performance Audit Survey

Accessibility to Management Information from the Child and Adult Protective Services (CAPS) System

**Child and Family Services Division
Operations and Technology Division
Department of Public Health and Human Services**

Members of the audit staff involved in this audit were Kent Rice and Mike Wingard.

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Chapter I - Introduction and Background

Introduction

The Legislative Audit Committee (LAC) designated a review of accessibility to management information from the Child and Adult Protective Services (CAPS) system as a “high priority” for performance audit work in the 2005 biennium. The performance audit objectives addressed the following CAPS concerns:

- ▶ Ability and time needed to generate reports and statistics.
- ▶ Accuracy and completeness of reporting.
- ▶ Difficulties using the system.

Our initial audit work focused on, “*What steps have been taken by the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) to improve accessibility to management information from CAPS?*”

Survey Scope And Methodologies

While several agencies and numerous personnel use CAPS, our review concentrated on the Child and Family Services Division (CFSD), which is the primary data collection entity and user of CAPS information. In addition to CFSD, we examined the role of the department’s Operations and Technology Division (OTD), which is responsible for CAPS programming and maintenance.

We interviewed department personnel regarding the CAPS system and types of management information generated. We obtained and reviewed various documents including:

- ▶ Federal and state regulations related to the CAPS system.
- ▶ Reports regarding federal reviews of CAPS and similar state systems.
- ▶ CFSD management team meeting minutes.
- ▶ CAPS contract information and reports.
- ▶ CAPS system documentation related to the original development effort.
- ▶ The most recent information technology plan for the department.
- ▶ A listing of standard CAPS reports.
- ▶ Examples of other management information reports.

Chapter I - Introduction and Background

One of our main areas of focus was review of the system used to document and track requests for system maintenance and modification, known as Tracker. We analyzed the data in the Tracker system regarding all CAPS system requests. We observed a CAPS change control meeting to help understand how priorities are established for CAPS change requests. We also examined the process used to develop CAPS software once a change request is approved.

We coordinated our review with two other Legislative Audit Division audits of DPHHS: 1) Foster Care Parent Program (04P-03), and 2) Workload/Caseload (04P-09).

Background

For many years, concerns were raised about the lack of information available on children in foster care and their families. To address some of these concerns, Congress amended Title IV-E of the Social Security Act in 1986 requiring the federal government to institute a foster care and adoption data collection system.

The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 provided federal funding for statewide automated child welfare information systems to carry out the states' programs under Title IV of the Social Security Act. This funding was available from October 1, 1993, through September 30, 1996, for the planning, design, development and installation of statewide systems. Montana received \$4,827,896 of federal funding and provided \$1,609,299 of state funding to create CAPS.

Montana's SACWIS System

CAPS is a statewide online information system used by DPHHS, the Department of Corrections, and Tribal Social Services agencies. CAPS supports monitoring of foster care cases, adoption cases, provider contracts and licensing, financial accounting, payments for services to providers, and reporting functions. It is required to meet federal Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) standards, and provide federal reporting requirement information for the Nationwide Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS).

Chapter I - Introduction and Background

CAPS became operational in 1996 and was designed to provide the following services:

- ▶ Automated payment approval process and warrant issuance to service providers.
- ▶ Automated case management by tracking all contacts made with individuals associated with the case. CAPS tracks court actions, maintains client information such as relationships, addresses, aliases, educational background, medical history, special needs, and financial resources.
- ▶ Maintain provider information such as licensing requirements, placement history for a provider facility, services provided, provider rates, key personnel, training, and payment history.

CAPS System Maintenance

CAPS has ongoing operational and maintenance needs. These system maintenance needs are met through a DPHHS contract with a private company. The purpose of the CAPS “facilities management” contract is to provide: application support, user training, help desk support, and production operations. A facilities management contract has been in place since initial system development in 1996. The term of the current facilities management contract is July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2004. The cost for system maintenance under this contract (5 years) was \$7,808,928. Per contract clause, DPHHS has extended the contract for an additional year to June 30, 2005.

Chapter II – Accessibility to CAPS Management Information

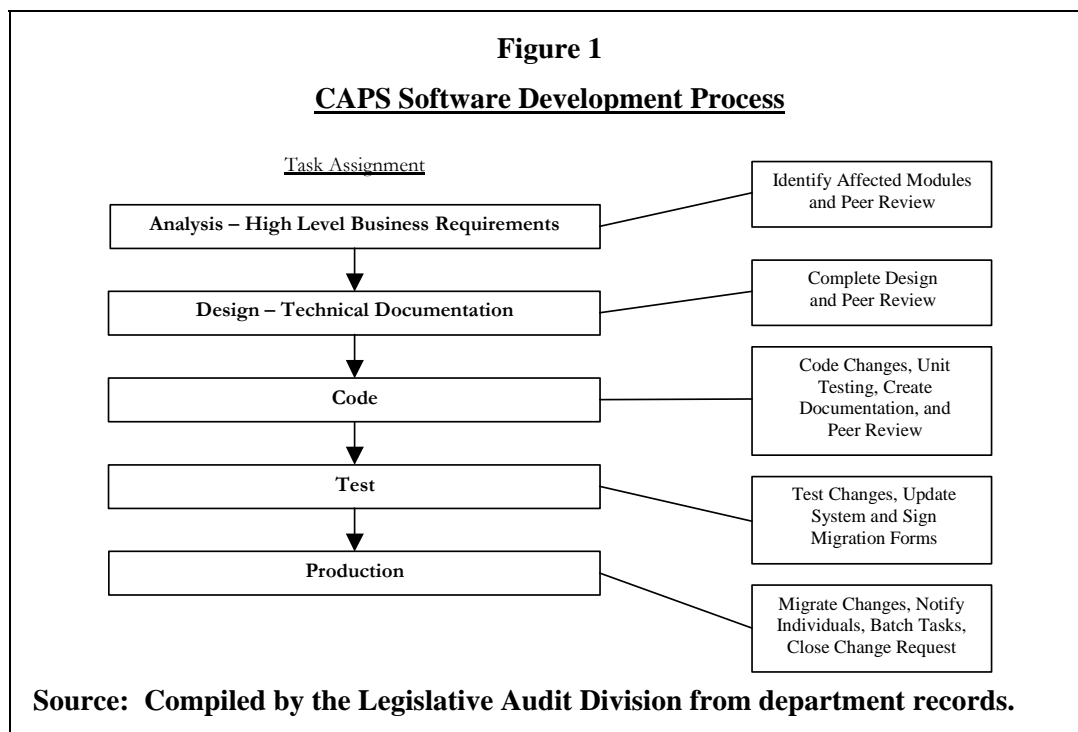
Introduction

Our review concentrated on the Child and Adult Protective Services (CAPS) system and procedures used for generating management information. This chapter presents information on the process used to change the CAPS system, as well as statistics on the number and types of change requests submitted over the past several years. The chapter also contains information on reviews of the CAPS system and user difficulties.

CAPS Change Process

One of our objectives was to review the ability and time needed to generate reports and statistics from CAPS. The main process used by the department for generating non-standard management information reports is the CAPS change request process. This process includes generation of new standard management information reports, as well as ad hoc reports.

CAPS is a mainframe computer system written in COBOL, a programming language developed in the late 1950's. The CAPS change process is a five-step process beginning with analysis of the problem or requested enhancement. The following flowchart details the CAPS software development process used by the Operations and Technology Division, Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS).



While this process can be time consuming, it is a standard approach for this type of system, and is used when implementing CAPS maintenance and enhancement requests, as well as generating ad hoc reports.

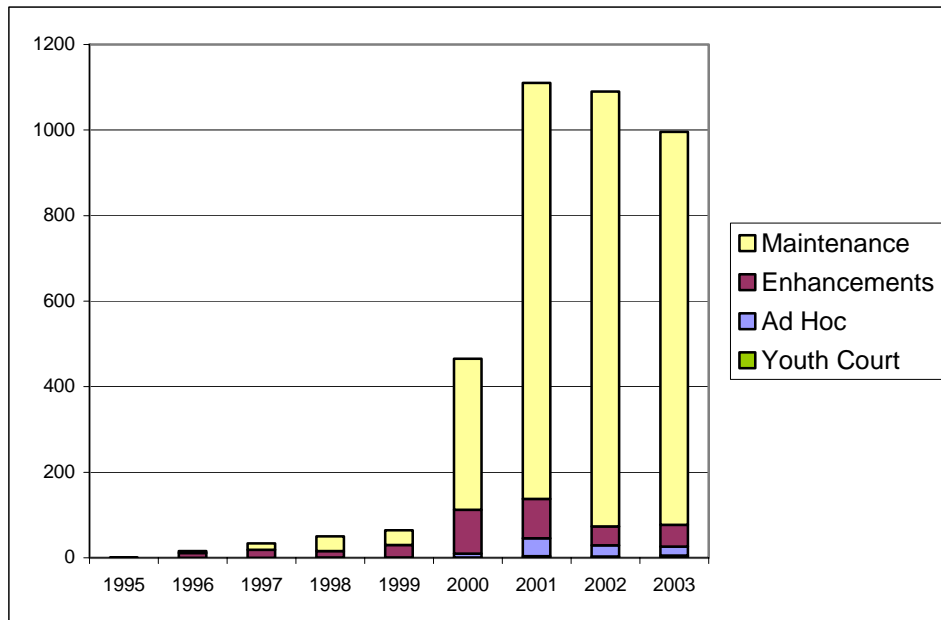
CAPS Change Requests

Requests for changes to CAPS originate from system users who report problems and request enhancements and reports. Requests for changes and enhancements are routed through two channels depending on the necessity of the request. Most requests go to the CAPS Change Control Committee, which determines the importance and level of priority for each request received. Change Control Committee membership includes department employees from the central office, as well as the field.

Chapter II - Accessibility to CAPS Management Information

Figure 2

CAPS Change Requests – Total
(1995 – 2003)



Note: Youth Court Requests do not show on the figure due to the low number of requests.

Source: Compiled by the Legislative Audit Division from department records.

There are several types of change requests including:

- ▶ Enhancement – add something new to the system.
- ▶ Maintenance – keep the system operating as intended.
- ▶ Ad Hoc – special request for changing the system.
- ▶ Youth Court – maintenance/enhancement related to Youth Court.

As can be seen in the figure above, maintenance requests have dominated system change requests for the past four years.

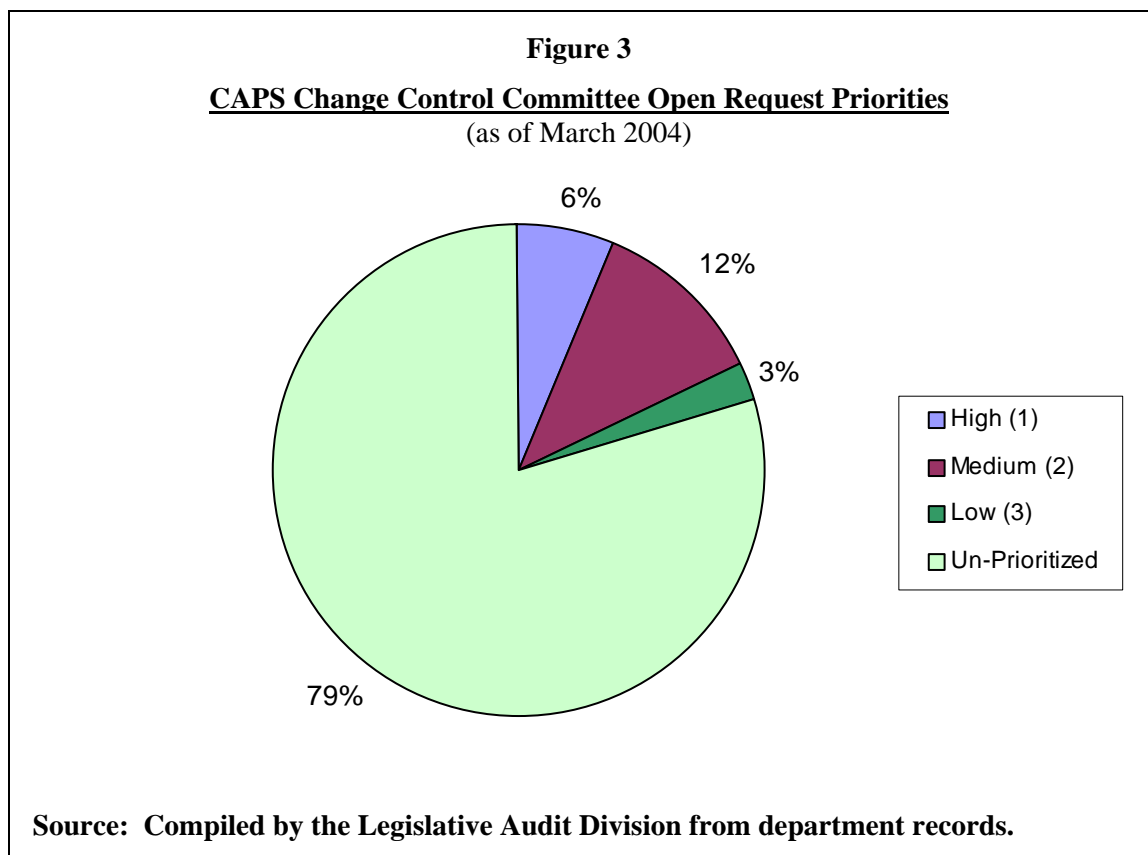
Request Change List

A request change list is maintained and reviewed by the CAPS Change Control Committee. Over four thousand requests have been registered on the list since CAPS implementation in 1996. These requests range from basic maintenance, to enhancements for improved customer service, to management information reports.

Chapter II – Accessibility to CAPS Management Information

The Change Control Committee meets quarterly to discuss and prioritize requests. During the quarterly meeting, the committee is only able to address the top 20 or so requests due to resource limitations (number of contracted programmers available).

The number of projects being worked on varies according to the number of available programmers (currently five) and the complexity of the project. As a project is completed, new and existing requests are reprioritized. Requests are categorized as a one, two, or three according to their priority status, with one being the highest priority. The following figure shows priorities for open requests as of March 2004.



Chapter II - Accessibility to CAPS Management Information

The following are examples of high priority requests:

- ▶ Maintenance (#3912): Third-party cost of care journal not processing correctly in SABHRS.
- ▶ Enhancement (#422): Management report listing children in need of permanency hearings.
- ▶ Ad Hoc (#3976): One-time extract report for use in comparing CAPS and Medicaid data to identify duplicate payments.

CAPS Open Change Requests

Due to the large amount of requests for enhancements and maintenance, there is a backlog of unaddressed requests. Since December 2003, open requests on the change list have remained fairly static due to a large number of ad hoc requests in the past. As of September 2004, there were 408 open requests as shown in the following table.

Table 1

CAPS Open Change Requests
(as of September 2004)

Type	March 2004	April 2004	Sept 2004
Maintenance	348	322	285
Enhancement	128	139	123
Ad hoc	3	2	0
Total	479	463	408

Note: Youth Court Requests are not included

Source: Compiled by the Legislative Audit Division from department records.

Based on our preliminary review of the request list, it is difficult to determine which requests are federal mandates, versus state mandates, versus department requests. In addition, it is difficult to accurately determine which requests are “management information reporting” related. What is clear is that priorities are continually

Chapter II – Accessibility to CAPS Management Information

changing, so completion of change requests is impacted on an ongoing basis.

Ad Hoc List

A separate request list is maintained to keep CAPS up-to-date with federal and state requirements. Since federal and state mandates and program compliance changes are often required to be completed in a short amount of time, these enhancements cannot be properly addressed through the normal change request process. The ad hoc list allows the request to circumvent the process and be addressed in the shortest amount of time possible (i.e.-these requests take precedence over other requests). Most of the requests on the ad hoc list are generated by federal requirements. Legislative and departmental requests are also included on this list if they are needed in a short amount of time. In April 2004, there were 2 requests on the ad hoc list, and as of September 2004, this list was reduced to zero.

Summary

The ability to create and generate reports exists, but the time needed can be lengthy.

The department has a process in place for generating standard and new management information reports from CAPS. However, due to the amount of changes requested, only some of the requests can be addressed right away. Based on CAPS system design, there is a required process that is used to change the system.

Conclusion

The type of system, available resources, and process used to prioritize requests create circumstances that cause delays in completing requests in a timely manner.

CAPS Reviews

Another one of our objectives was to review the accuracy and completeness of CAPS reporting. The Child and Family Services Division (CFSD) is currently reviewing CAPS reports to try to improve reporting. The Division is identifying reports where the same numbers or counts are calculated, reviewing the calculation programming code, and eliminating duplicates and variations of

Chapter II - Accessibility to CAPS Management Information

calculations. The purpose is to increase consistency/accuracy of reports by only using one method of calculation.

Federal Review of CAPS

The federal government is continually reviewing foster care and CAPS. One level of review relates to certification of Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information Systems (SACWIS). Because federal funding was used for system development, states must receive certification. Only five states have been fully certified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Montana is not one of the five. The department continues to work toward certification of CAPS, which involves completion of interfaces with other systems.

In August of 2002, a federal review of Montana's Child and Family Services Program was conducted by a team of HHS reviewers who examined Montana's system to assure state performance in the areas of safety, permanency, and well being with regard to seven factors. Part of the review required federal reviewers to inspect Montana's SACWIS system, CAPS. In the final report the federal reviewers noted CAPS as an area of strength for Montana. It was a strength because the State has the automated capacity to track the required information on children in foster care, such as their status, demographic characteristics, location, and goal.

In addition, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) completed a study of child welfare related to states' development of SACWIS systems. The following excerpt is from the final report:

“Several factors affect states’ ability to collect and report reliable data on children served by state child welfare agencies, and some problems exist, such as a lack of clear and documented guidance, with HHS’s oversight and technical assistance. ...although states were mandated to begin reporting Automated Foster Care and Adoption Reporting System (AFCARS) in 1995, few reviews of states’ AFCARS reporting capabilities have been conducted to assist states in resolving some of their challenges.”

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LAD Review

The Legislative Audit Division (LAD) conducted a limited scope Information Systems (IS) audit (03DP-05) of five DPHHS systems, including CAPS, in 2003. The results of the IS audit indicated CAPS is operating as intended. The audit tested selected edits including payment edits and eligibility determination, and ensured data validations were functioning as intended. The audit also reviewed the CAPS report for reconciling transactions between the system and SABHRS. In addition, LAD completed an IS audit of CAPS in 1997 (97DP-06). This audit reviewed general and application controls within the data processing environment.

Summary

The accuracy and completeness of CAPS reporting is reviewed.

Our current audit work did not test CAPS reporting accuracy and completeness since several entities conduct reviews in this area. In addition, DPHHS is conducting its own review of CAPS to try and improve report accuracy and consistency.

Conclusion

The department and other entities are addressing report accuracy and completeness issues.

Difficulties Using CAPS

Difficulty using the CAPS system has been a concern expressed by users on an ongoing basis and relates to our third objective. We believe this is more a concern with system design and the multiple screens used to input/extract data. CAPS was initially designed as an automated payment approval and case management system, not for individuals to generate reports and statistics. Thus, as detailed previously in this chapter, the process for obtaining management information can be lengthy.

Individuals commenting on this issue during the federal government's review of the system expressed favorable opinions regarding CAPS. They noted the system is easily accessible through remote access after hours and on weekends, generates helpful reports used by managers and administrators, and you can access information on all children in foster care, including locations, goals, and treatment plans. According to individuals, CAPS can identify

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the names, status, location, and goals of all children in foster care and the system meets the needs of staff in their day-to-day activities. A few individuals suggested the system is time-consuming and not user friendly. One concern noted was there are too many screens and they are difficult to navigate if the user does not have significant computer knowledge.

Individuals also noted all CFSD staff receive a week of training on CAPS and report the training is helpful. The department has an ongoing training component for CAPS. Training is conducted for new employees, as well as providing updates for existing employees. While training provides technical instruction for use of CAPS, it cannot provide complete instruction on how to address every situation experienced during use of CAPS. The number of screens (online forms) in CAPS is in the hundreds, so it can be overwhelming to some users. Changes and enhancements to CAPS have added to the number of screens and changed procedures for using the system. These changes impact CAPS users and can create difficulties with using the system.

Summary

Some users experience difficulties using CAPS.

Some users experience difficulties using CAPS. These difficulties can relate to the extensive number of screens used to input/extract data, which is a result of system design and ongoing system enhancements. The department has an ongoing CAPS training component to assist users and address difficulties with system use.

Conclusion

Difficulties with CAPS use relate to the extensive number of screens and original system design, which are partially addressed through available training.

Future Plans

Although significant enhancements were made to CAPS, the department believes it has outlived its expected eight year lifespan. The DPHHS Information Technology (IT) Plan includes a recommendation to replace CAPS with a new system in fiscal year 2006. Based on its review, the CAPS IT Planning Committee

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developed the following recommendations for the CAPS successor system:

- ▶ CAPS should be capable of incremental growth, automatic collection and exchange of information across an adverse set of systems and service providers, and have the ability to develop reports and query data that is electronically submitted to state and federal entities.
- ▶ CAPS will support the Common Client Database concept with the overall vision of improving outcomes for Montana's vulnerable citizens.
- ▶ CAPS users will have the ability to extract data from a data warehouse to create their own reports for legislative purposes, state advisory councils, local community involvement, management analysis, etc.
- ▶ CAPS users will use a common client identifier and have the ability to interface with the Social Security Administration for SSN verification.
- ▶ CAPS will have enhanced interfaces with TEAMS (The Economic Assistance Management System), SEARCHS (System for the Enforcement and Recovery of Child Support), CCUBS (Child Care Under the Big Sky), etc.
- ▶ CAPS will provide online access to criminal background information.
- ▶ CAPS will have the ability to interface with the appropriate jurisdiction to perform criminal background checks, using the best technology available.

If the department's future plans are realized and a successor system is implemented, the concern of difficulties using the system may or may not be reduced. Users must learn how to use a new system, so difficulties may be increased. As time passes and users become comfortable using a new system, difficulties, at least for some users, may be reduced.

Overall Conclusion

An Audit Does Not Appear Necessary.

The objectives of our review were related to CAPS concerns and included:

- ▶ Ability and time needed to generate reports and statistics.

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- ▶ Accuracy and completeness of reporting.
- ▶ Difficulties using the system.

Our review indicates CAPS has the ability to generate reports and statistics, but the time needed can be lengthy. The accuracy and completeness of CAPS reporting is reviewed by both federal and state entities. Finally, CAPS users may experience difficulties using the system, which is addressed through the department's ongoing training component and future plans.

The answer to our audit planning question, "What steps have been taken by the department to improve accessibility to management information from CAPS?" is answered through maintenance and enhancements to the system. The information provided to the federal government is used to manage the program. While Montana did not receive a perfect score on its last review, for the most part, CAPS is meeting federal government requirements. In relation to management information reporting requests from other sources, namely the legislature and department, the department addresses these requests in the same manner. CAPS does not have the ability to adjust quickly to change or the capacity to create user-generated reports from a data warehouse. Future department plans address these issues.

Due to the age and design of the CAPS system, and the department's recommendation for a successor system, more audit work does not appear necessary. Based on our review, it appears the two main issues a future system needs to address, in relation to management information reporting, are the ability to adjust to change and the capability for user-generated reports. Based on department IT Plan recommendations, these two areas are being considered, and future audit work on CAPS reporting is not necessary at this time. If a new system is approved in the future, further audit involvement could be re-evaluated at that point in time.